

gundy. But a few years before Zwingli's advent it had finally decreed the separation of the Confederation from the empire, and it now, in a majority of cantons at least, spurned allegiance to a degenerate Church. At this critical emergency the clergy had lost their influence by their dissolute lives, and here, as in Germany, there was a Tetzels, in the person of Samson, the papal vendor of indulgences, to stir the popular resistance. Among such a people the denunciation of Roman slavery was not likely to fall on deaf ears, though, strangely enough, the Forest Cantons, which had led the van of resistance to the Habsburg oppressor, clung to the traditional Church.

Switzerland had given an object lesson to Europe in the vindication of political independence, which Europe had learned to respect, if not to imitate. Swiss heroism had thrown a halo over this mountain land of herdsmen and husbandmen, and it was not without cause that Machiavelli held up the little Alpine Confederation as a rebuke to the degenerate republics of his own land. Their alliance was coveted by every ambitious potentate who wished to share in the spoil of Italy; and their co-operation, before the battle of Marignano, augured certain success to the side that was fortunate enough to secure it. The policy of espousing the quarrels of their ambitious neighbours in return for French, Spanish, or German gold was, however, as Zwingli testifies, a demoralising one; and it is characteristic of the public spirit of the republican reformer that he strove to check this nefarious practice. In this respect he stands far apart from Luther, who eschewed what we regard as public spirit as outside the sphere of the religious reformer. In Zwingli, on the other hand, the citizen was not lost in the reformer. Luther might leave politics to his elector, concern himself exclusively with his duty as a religious teacher, or only interfere to exhort the people to submission to the powers that be. In a republican canton like Zurich the citizen had his political responsibilities, and Zwingli, wisely or unwisely, identified the reform movement with the political policy which he considered indispensable for the good of the State.. It is usual to decry his action in view of its melancholy result at Cappel. It was at least manly and patriotic, and indicates a conception of public duty from which the political self-